



President's Welcome

Welcome to e-Bulletin No. 68 of the Workers Compensation Commission.

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Christmas timetable

The Commission's listing policy for December 2016/January 2017 will be:

Teleconferences

Last day for teleconferences in 2016 Thursday 22 December 2016

First day for teleconferences in 2017 Monday 9 January 2017

Conciliation/Arbitration & Mediations

Last day for con/arbs & mediations in 2016 Thursday 22 December 2016

First day for con/arbs & mediations in 2017 Monday 9 January 2017
(For all areas other than Sydney CBD)

Monday 16 January 2017
(For matters in the Sydney CBD)

Urgent matters may be listed during the period 23 December 2016 to 6 January 2017 at the request of parties.

The Commission's registry will be open throughout December and January, except weekends and public holidays.

Issuing medical assessment certificates and certificates of determination

In recognition of the 28 day appeal time limits, the Commission will not be issuing medical assessment certificates or certificates of determinations from 23 December 2016 to 2 January 2017 (inclusive). The Commission will recommence issuing medical assessment certificates and certificates of determination on 3 January 2017.

Please note that normal appeal time limits will continue to apply.

The Commission will continue to sign and seal consent orders received from the parties during the above period.

Level 21 refurbishment

As foreshadowed in e-Bulletin No. 66 issued in June 2016, the Commission is undertaking a major refurbishment of its premises at Level 21, 1 Oxford Street, Darlinghurst.

The refurbishment project includes improvements to security, sound recording and acoustic privacy, and will include the technology required to conduct online hearings.

Construction will be staged over the period from 23 December 2016 to mid-May 2017, with no access to the floor from 23 December 2016 to 15 January 2017. During the construction period, access to some areas will be restricted, with conference and meeting rooms limited during the period of demolition and construction.

Medical assessments for weekly compensation

Limitations on entitlement to ongoing weekly payments of compensation will take effect shortly. By operation of section 39 of the *Workers Compensation Act 1987*, a worker has no entitlement to weekly payments of compensation after an aggregate period of 260 weeks of payments unless the worker's injury results in a degree of permanent impairment of more than 20%.

The Commission will endeavour to refer disputes regarding the degree of permanent impairment to approved medical specialists without delay. Parties are encouraged to proactively review matters and to lodge medical disputes with the Commission by Form 7 – Application for Assessment by Approved Medical Specialist.

The *Workers Compensation Amendment (Transitional Arrangements for Weekly Payments) Regulation 2016* also provides that an existing recipient of weekly payments, who may be affected by the five-year limitation on entitlement to weekly payments of compensation and

whose degree of permanent impairment has been assessed already, may have one further assessment by an approved medical specialist for the purpose of determining the worker's entitlement to ongoing weekly payments of compensation.

Christmas message

On behalf of the Commission, I wish you and your families a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.



Judge Greg Keating
President